

T H E
RURAL MAID,
A
P O E M.

*Averse to Censure, gentle in Debate,
Perfect she seems, and delicately great.*

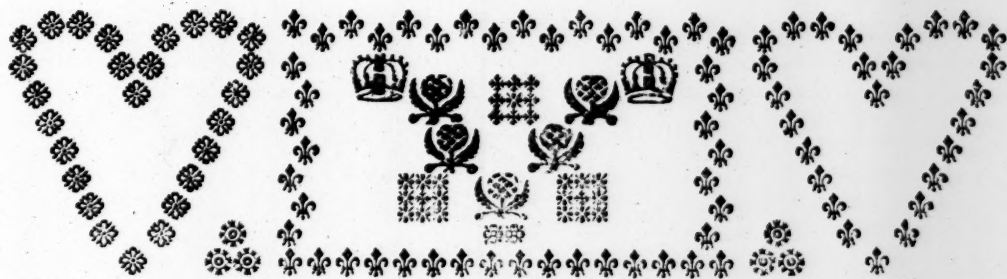


L O N D O N:

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(3)



T H E
RURAL MAID,
A
P O E M.



N no false Theme, nor fancy'd Fair, I write;
No spurious Female, nor romantick Knight;
But, with plain Truth, a moving Tale relate,
Not adding ought, and nothing will abate.

Thus then near fam'd *Augusta's* Tow'rs appear,
A pleasant Village famous for the Fair;

A 2

Lofty

Fix'd on a fair Ascent, it charms the Mind,
 With Art and Nature variously combin'd;
 No Charm can Art to easy Nature give,
 But what the latter makes the first receive:
 Boundless the Prospect, and the View how great?
 And once, alas ! the Muses blest Retreat.

Here then, a neat but little Cottage lays,
 Tho' void of Grandeur, yet deserves our Praise;
 A happy Pair this rural Place contains,
 Whom Care ne'er seeks, and where no Vice remains.
 A lovely Nymph they boast of temper mild,
 An only Daughter, and an only Child;
 A RURAL MAID, adorn'd with ev'ry Grace,
 The Glory, Boast, and Pleasure, of the Place;
 Whose genuine Charms the strongest Lustre wear,
 And thinks no Fault for to be thought sincere:

No

No Pride, no Patches, nor no Paint, has she,
But Honour, Youth, and pure Simplicity.

No wonder they should all their Thoughts employ,
And found their Glory in this young one's Joy ;
Since all the Blessings Heaven can bestow,
That Life e'er tastes, or Virtue feels, below ;
All, all, in the dear lovely MAID is join'd,
The pride of Soul, of Body, and of Mind.!

No wonder then if that a neighb'ring Swain,
Unskill'd in Love, yet subject to its Pain,
Should eye the Nymph, and, with a rustick Leer,
Imbibe a Passion, and th' Impression bear :
Near to his Fair the smitten Swain does live,
Free to her looks, and free his Heart does give ;

Yet,

Yet, Novice to the softer Arts of LOVE,
 Vainly he look'd, and vainly did he rove :
 Something, he thought, he'd never felt before,
 A real Ailment, and a settled Sore,
 His rest disturb'd by Night, by Day is seen,
 A fighting Object on the flow'ry Green :
 Resolv'd, at last, the fatal Cause to find,
 What hurt his quiet, and disturb'd his Mind,
 He views the Nymph, a nice observance takes,
 And, then this fond, this just Confession makes.

' 'Tis not the outward Fair that thus can charm,
 ' Invade my Reason, and my Breast alarm ;
 ' For tho' upon her Cheeks the Graces vie,
 ' LOVE in her Looks, and GLORY in her Eye ;
 ' What tho' with ev'ry shining VIRTUE blest'd,
 ' Which Thought can frame, or Mortal e'er possess'd ;
 Tho'

- ' Tho' form'd as fair as ever fair can be,
 ' Yet others have I seen as fair as she ;
 ' Something is touch'd, a nobler Wound receiv'd,
 ' Than Beauty can, or Wit has Power to give ;
 ' Those are but Charms which quickly will decay,
 ' Which Time will blast, and Age will wear away.
 ' What then must she, what must the fair one have ?
 ' What, but a Mind, to make me thus her Slave ?
 ' Proud of the Chain I o'er the World would rove.
 ' Confess my Bondage, and my Fate approve :
 ' Let farthest Nations her great Name adore,
 ' And never, never, think of Freedom more.

Thus spake the Swain, whom tender LOVE had
[taught
To speak the thing, the very thing, he thought :
Unus'd to Art, to Falshood yet unknown,
Nor knew a Passion which he durst not own.

Penfive

Pensive he seems, and thro' the Groves he walks,
 He haunts the Shades, and to the Trees he talks;
 The Trees upon whose Bark he writes, and, there,
 He carves the Title of his matchless Fair ;

Such Names he gives her as fond LOVERS use,
 As Pride might ask, and Honour not refuse :

But, ah! sad Fate, he's summon'd now away,

'Tis Honour calls, he must no longer stay ;

Doom'd o'er the Seas, the roaring Main to pass,

To leave his Country, and his RURAL LASS.

To grace the Song, t' excite the tender Theme,

NELLY be hers, and THYRSIS be his Name ;

His Hands perform whate'er his Heart indites,

And, to his NELLY, thus, fond THYRSIS writes.

[known,
 ' NELLY, my Fair! hast thou bright Nymph e'er
 ' One secret Pang which purest Love might own,

' Has

Have those my Fair e'er felt that tender Flame,
 Which Nature dictates, and which LOVERS claim ?
 Unskill'd in Falshood, and in Action clear,
 Has ev'ry Thought and Gesture been sincere ?
 Say, say, my fairest ! have those Eyes express'd,
 What Fancy yielded, and the Heart confess'd ?
 O ! if fond THYRSIS e'er, had pow'r to move,
 To touch your Breast, or to demand your LOVE,
 Pity the Youth pierc'd with the *Cyprian* Dart,
 Decreed to LOVE, and yet condemn'd to part.

Ah ! gentle Maid, how hard are *Fate's* Commands,
 How great the Struggle, where the Question stands ?
 If here I stay, will not the World accuse,
 Condemn my Folly, and my Flame abuse ?
 What will not cens'ring Tongues vouchsafe to say,
 On him who waits, when Honour calls away ?

B

Tell

Tell me, my Fair, upon what Point to steer.
 Transport me thither, or transfix me here ;
 For what are Fame, or Fortune, LOVE, to thee!
 Thou art the Essence of the World to me.
 Is there a Bliss, unshar'd by her, cou'd prove,
 A Joy to THYRSIS, thus oppress'd with LOVE ?
 No, NELLY, no ; without thy milder Aid,
 All Fame must sicken, and all Pleasure fade :
 All that remains for me, sad wretch ! to do,
 Is still to love, invariably true :
 With just Obedience to my Fate submit,
 And act the rest as you yourself think fit.

Yet, with his NELLY, let but THYRSIS stay,
 How fleeting would old *Chronos* pass away ?
 But if his NELLY says, hence, hence, fond Youth,
 Nor idly prostitute the Voice of Truth ;

Where

Where not a Sigh can plaintive LOVE obtain,
 How fruitless is the Passion, and how vain?
 Ah! what can NELLY utter such a Sound,
 Tear my poor Heart, and dash me to the Ground?
 Could she these crucifying Words impart,
 Could she, sweet Syren! bear the Tyger's Heart?
 Ah, no; much rather let my NELLY say,
 Haste, gentle THYRSIS; ling'ring Youth, away!
 Honour invites; NELLY accepts your Love;
 And, though you leave her, must the Act approve:
 Does from her mutual loving Heart declare,
 None but kind THYRSIS shall inhabit there.

O Bliss! too great for human kind to feel;
 Or, if when felt, too mighty to conceal;
 Pride of my Soul, Refiner of my Youth,
 Choicest of Women, sweetest Fount of Truth;

Can she, who fraught with Nature's richest Store,
 The Good, the Great, the Virtuous, and what more?
 Can this alluring, lovely, beauteous, she,
 Once deign to harbour one poor Thought of me?
 Hear me, dear Maid! if but in Fancy blest,
 Tho' Fortune's Play-thing, or tho' NELLY's Jest;
 Yet, like the Needle by the Loadstone sway'd,
 I'll own no Sov'reign but the RURAL MAID.

And whilst far distant I am doom'd to go,
 Since Fate and NELLY have decreed it so,
 Let no rude Cares disturb thy anxious Breast,
 Invade thy Quiet, or reproach thy Rest;
 My ev'ry Thought, my ev'ry Act, shall be,
 To cull all Nature's noblest Hoard for thee;
 To seek each Gem, *Golconda* can afford,
 And bring them to my Bosom's fairest Lord.

But

But if, all penfive on the *Indian Bay*
 Thy THYRSIS takes his folitary Way ;
 When fome officious Tongue fhall rudely prove,
 That thy poor THYRSIS drags the Chain of Love ;
 Striking this faithful Heart I'll own it true,
 And, NELLY, confecrate each Hour to you.
 But fhould fome happier Youth fupplant my LOVE,
 While THYRSIS does a piteous Exile rove ;
 Should he prevail, and thy Affection gain,
 Ah gentle Youth! and! Ah to happy Swain!
 How can my NELLY touch her Breast, and fwear,
 None but her THYRSIS fhall inhabit there?
 But when I'm dead, as it will foon be known,
 Then let my NELLY read, and, blufhing, own,
 ' Here lies a Youth who's ill-tim'd End was fuch,
 ' Whofe chiefest Fault was that he lov'd too much ;
 ' Whofe

' Whose steady Love three Summers Suns had try'd,
 ' Who liv'd for me and by my rigour dy'd ;
 ' Ah ! hapless Youth ! by fatal Passion sway'd,
 ' He dy'd a Martyr to the RURAL MAID.'

O fair one double down this sacred Page,
 To warn your Youth, and to instruct your Age ;
 Each Line sincere, which does this Truth impart,
 Write on your Soul, and graft within your Heart,
 " That, from the Beggar, to the mightiest Kings,
 " Women are fair, and Men seducing Things."



F I N I S.